

## Caring in mind? Professionals' awareness of young carers and young adult carers in Switzerland

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## Caring in Mind? Professionals Awareness of Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.

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## **Main Text File**

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## Caring in Mind? Professionals' Awareness of Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in Switzerland.

### Abstract

Findings from international research emphasis the need of these young people to be identified and recognised. Therefore, a nationwide quantitative study of professionals' awareness was conducted in the Swiss context. Data were collected from professionals working in education, healthcare and social services. The study examined professionals' familiarity with the terms used to describe young people with caring responsibilities; their ability to identify the population in their professional context; their perception of the relevance of the issue; their ability to support them; and their own training needs. Potential study participants were contacted via email. Data were collected using an online survey which was open for 14 weeks during the period of September to December 2016. Survey data from 2'311 professionals, who reported being regularly in contact with young people with caring responsibilities in their occupational context, were included for analysis. Of all terms presented in the survey, *young carer* was the term most familiar to all professionals. Among healthcare and education sector, the percentage of professionals familiar with this term was higher than that among professionals from social services. Professionals from social services were the most likely to consider the issue relevant to their work, those from education were the least likely. Professionals who were familiar with the terms describing young carers were more likely to consider the issue relevant to their work. Study results showed that more than half of the respondents had not identified young people with caring responsibilities, and that the ability of participants to identify young carers was related to their occupational sector. The perceived ability to support young carers was related to their reported ability to recognise them. In order to

enable professionals to support young carers, raising awareness, providing training for professionals and a national network of existing organisations should be well considered.

**Keywords:** Young Carers, Young Caregivers, Professionals, Awareness, Support, Quantitative Study

**What is known about this topic**

- Young people with caring responsibilities often do not identify themselves as carers;
- Young (adult) carer are often not recognised and therefore are overlooked by professionals;
- No dedicated services supporting young (adult) carers are available in Switzerland so far.

**What this paper adds**

- This is the first national quantitative study examining the level of professionals' awareness of young carers;
- The findings indicate that familiarity relevance and identification represent key factors describing the level of awareness of Swiss professionals on young (adult) carers;
- Professionals report their own training needs in order to be able to support young people with caring responsibilities within their occupational sectors

## INTRODUCTION

International research findings emphasise the need of young people with a caring role to be identified and recognised. Switzerland finds itself on an emerging level in regard to its national awareness and policy responses (Leu & Becker, 2016). These so called young carers (YC) (i.e., those aged up to 18) or young adult carers (YAC) (i.e., those aged 18 to 24) as they are internationally referred to perform caring activities that would generally be associated with adults (Becker, 2000; Becker & Becker, 2008). While adult carers are widely recognised among professionals and support services have improved over the last few years in Switzerland (GFS, 2019), there is still a marginal public awareness of children, adolescents and young adults providing care (Leu & Becker, 2016; Joseph et al., 2019). In 2014, Swiss researchers have started to develop a body of research evidence and to raise awareness on this specific target group. The latest quantitative research suggests a national prevalence of eight to nine percent YC among children and adolescents aged 9 to 15 years in Switzerland (Leu et al., 2019; Otto et al., 2019). But no dedicated support structures for YC have been developed and implemented so far. In regard to policy responses, the Swiss Federal Council identified in its national action plan multiple support options intending to improve the situation for all carers (Swiss Federal Council, 2014). Yet no special attention was paid to the specific needs of young people with caring responsibilities. In the latest national survey, YC (9- 15 years) indicated help in emergencies, information and advice in emergencies and supervision, enabling hobbies as well as being asked about their own opinion (Otto et al., 2019).

The early identification of YC is essential in order to provide appropriate support. However, it is a challenge because of the *hidden nature* of the caring role, which has been described as a core feature of YC and their families (Banks et al., 2001; Banks et al., 2002; Leu & Becker, 2019; Morris, King, Turner & Payne, 2015). Young people with caring responsibilities often do not identify themselves as carers and therefore they are not

recognised in their own environment (Hamilton, 2019; Leu, Frech, & Jung, 2018a; Stamatopoulos, 2015). In many ways, this exclusion leaves them without access to appropriate support (Fives, Kennan, Canavan, & Brady, 2013; Frank & Slatcher, 2009; Smyth, Cass, & Hill, 2011). Hence, it is important that professionals (i.e., those in education, healthcare and social services) who – whether consciously or not – are in contact with YC are informed and aware of the issue (Nagl-Cupal et al., 2014; Phelps, 2017). While earlier research regarding the level of professionals' awareness used a qualitative approach (Leu, Frech, & Jung, 2018b; Franklin et al., 2018), the current study was the first to use a quantitative survey to examine the level of awareness of the issue of YC and YAC among professionals from education, healthcare and social services. According to findings from international research (Leu & Becker, 2016), in-country awareness is central in order to provide support for YC/YAC. Therefore, we used three indicators in order to assess Swiss professionals' awareness of YC/YAC: *familiarity* (being familiar with the terminology related to the target group), *relevance* (perceiving the issue of YC as relevant in their occupational context) and *identification* (having the ability to identify young people with caring responsibilities in their occupational context). Additionally, we aimed to assess professionals' ability to support YC, and their own training needs. As indicated by preliminary findings (Leu, Frech, Jung, 2018a; 2018b), we assumed that most Swiss professionals are not aware of the issue of YC. Therefore we predicted *familiarity*, *relevance* and *identification* to be present in the minority of professionals (i.e., less than 50%). Differences regarding the levels of awareness of YC between different occupational sectors were analysed. In addition, we report descriptive data on perceived training needs of the professionals.

## METHODS

This study was part of the larger Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) research project YC and YAC in Switzerland. An ongoing Young Carers research strategy was initiated with various methodological designs (for further information: SNF Money Follows CH-UK, 10001AM\_160355). The current study employed a quantitative approach. National data were collected by conducting a cross-sectional online survey among Swiss professional populations from education, healthcare and social services. The survey was conducted in German, French and Italian.

### Participants

The survey focused on professionals from education (e.g., teachers, school social workers), healthcare (e.g., nurses, physicians, physiotherapists) and social services (e.g., social workers) and related sectors who reported being in contact with young people holding caring responsibilities. The study participants were recruited in all cantons (26) and three languages regions (German, French, Italian) of Switzerland. Having no national database of professionals working in these three sectors of Switzerland, a purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants. Roughly, Switzerland counts 118'000 professionals working in education (without universities; Federal Statistic Office, 2019). Nursing staff (without physicians, medical therapists) counted 180'000 professionals (Merçay, Burla & Widmer, 2016) and within the social sector 110'500 were recorded. (Federal Statistic Office, 2016)

Contact details of potential participants were retrieved from the research group's institutional database. Of these, key stakeholders were identified and requested to invite colleagues and contacts in their wider professional network to participate in the survey. Additionally, a search for additional contacts via internet (public authorities, institutions and organisations) was conducted on a national as well as on a canton-wide level. A total of 5'981 addresses (individuals or organisations/institutions) were contacted by email. By using the snowball principle in this way, no information on the exact number of persons who received the survey



invitation can be provided. The total number of respondents was 4'731. Only those professionals who indicated being in contact with young people who perform tasks that are usually associated with a caring role (as described in the literature, (Joseph, Becker, Becker, & Regel, 2009) during their routine occupation were considered for inclusion ( $n = 2'495$ ). Participants who reported their main occupation not being in education, healthcare or social services were excluded ( $n = 184$ ). The final sample size for analysis consisted of 2'311 professionals.

### Questionnaire

The research team developed a questionnaire based on the qualitative findings of a national study of young carers' needs in Switzerland (Leu, Frech & Jung, 2018a,) and on the professionals' perspectives regarding their awareness of young people with caring responsibilities (Cox & Pakenham, 2014; Leu, Frech, & Jung, 2018b). The aim of the questionnaire development was to extend and contextualise the qualitative data from the previous studies. Prior study findings indicated that the following factors are important in order to raise the level of awareness of YC: information about the terminology, relevance of the issue of YC and ability to identify these young people. The methodology of the concept analysis of German definitions of young carers (Frech et al, 2019) was applied to find French as well as Italian terms similar to the broader definition of YC. The questionnaire was developed in German, French and Italian. No version was provided in Romansh (fourth official language in Switzerland) due to the small number of people speaking this language (less than 0.05% (Federal Statistical Office, 2016)) and the fact that the Romansh-speaking population speaks at least one of the other languages. Initially, the German version of the questionnaire was tested with professionals from all three sectors as well as YC. The results were discussed within the institutional research board as well as with the international advisory board of the main project (international experts on YC). Following editing, the questionnaire was again piloted with experts in the field of education, healthcare and social services. The

questionnaire was then translated into French and Italian by professional translators with both cultural and professional knowledge. In accordance with the procedure for the German questionnaire, the French and the Italian language versions were pre-tested by educational, healthcare and social services experts as well as YC and edited with special attention to the wording. The following study variables (19 items in total) were included in the questionnaire:

***Characteristics of participants.*** Demographic variables collected in the survey included gender and age in years, work experience, profession(s) of occupation and language(s) spoken in their occupational context. Answers to the questions concerning age and gender were not compulsory. Due to the variety of different professions and diverse qualifications, professionals' age could not be presumed to correspond with the average working age of 18 to 64 for females and 65 for males.

***Familiarity with the terminology.*** There is no legal German, French or Italian terminology for children, adolescents and young adults caring for ill or disabled family members or persons close. In order to introduce the participants to the concept of YC, a translation of Becker's definition of a *young carer* (Becker, 2000) as well as a *young adult carer* (Becker & Becker, 2008) was provided. Participants were asked whether they had heard of the English terms 'young carers', 'young adolescent carers', 'young adult carers', 'young caregivers', and 'children as next of kin' (yes; no; not sure).

***Relevance of the issue of YC.*** To assess the perceived relevance of the issue of YC, professionals were asked to rate the overall importance/relevance of the issue of YC in their occupational context (*very relevant; relevant; less relevant; not at all relevant; I am not sure*).

***Encountering YC.*** In addition, professionals were asked if they encounter young people with caring responsibilities in their occupational context. They reported the numbers of YC they have met within the last 12 months (*no; 1-3; 4-5; 6-10; more than 10*).

***Ability to support YC.*** Professionals were asked if they can support young people as part of their occupational activities (*yes; no; not sure*). If they reported that they were able to provide support, a follow up question was asked in order to explore *how* they could provide such support (*open answers, three options max.*) and whether they could refer these young people to organizations which offered support for them (*open answers, five options max.*).

***Professionals' own training needs.*** In addition, professionals were asked what kind of training would be useful in order to recognise YC (*more information in terms of brochures or websites; training session/s (lasting up to max. one hour); further training (lasting one or several days), a qualified professional unit (with hub function); none; other*). Multiple answers were possible.

### **Data collection**

The online survey was hosted through a commercial provider (SurveyMonkey). The participants received information via email introducing them to the study. This included a direct link to the online survey. The online survey was open from mid-September to end of December 2016. During this 14 weeks' period, two email reminders were sent out.

### **Data analysis**

Data preparation and statistical analyses were conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25.

For the analysis three dichotomous indicators for professionals' awareness of the issue of YC were derived based on the survey answers: *familiarity, relevance* and identification. We tested how these indicators were related by conducting Chi-Square independence tests and effect size (Phi  $\phi$ ).

A familiarity variable was computed in order to group participants into two subsamples: familiar with at least one term (*yes*) versus not familiar with at least one term (*no, not sure*).

A dichotomous relevance variable was computed in order to group participants into two subsamples: issue was relevant (*very relevant; relevant*) versus the issue was not/less relevant (*less relevant; not at all relevant; I am not sure*). Based on professionals' reports whether they encounter YC in their occupational context, a dichotomous identification variable was computed in order to group participants into two subsamples: identification of young people with caring responsibilities (encounter *yes (identified)*) versus no identification of young people with caring responsibilities (encounter *no; not sure; never thought about it; other*). To test the hypotheses, one sample z-tests for proportions and Chi-Square independence tests were conducted. The significance level for testing the hypotheses was  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Confidence intervals for the subsample proportions were calculated to evaluate differences between occupational sectors.

### **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

The project was presented to the competent cantonal ethics committee in Zurich in the form of a comprehensive ethics application. The committee approved the application and issued a clarification of responsibility (No. 85-2015). The study participation was voluntary. After choosing the language (German, French or Italian), the participants were informed about the study aim, the funding, the length of the survey as well as the anonymisation. They indicated their informed consent by participating in the survey.

## **RESULTS**

### **Characteristics of participants**

Participants from the healthcare sector comprised the majority of the sample (58.7% versus 21.7% for education and 19.6% for social services). The average age amongst the participants who choose to report their age ( $n = 2099$ ) was 43.1 ( $SD = 11.9$ ; range: 15 -78). The demographic data are summarised in table 1.

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Insert table 1 about here

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### **Professionals familiarity with the YC terminology**

Overall, 43.8% of professionals from education, healthcare and social services were familiar with *at least one of the terms* referring to young people with caring responsibilities (CI 41.8-45.8) (see table 2). A z-test confirmed our hypothesis that less than 50% of the targeted population was not familiar with any of the terms,  $z = -5.95$ ,  $p < .001$ . Healthcare represented the occupational sector most familiar with at least one of the terms (46.2%; CI 43.5-48.9). Of all terms presented in the survey, young carer was the one most familiar to all professionals (37.2%). In the healthcare (46.2%, CI 43.5, 48.9) and education sector (45.0%, CI 40.6, 49.5), the percentage of professionals *being familiar with the term young carer* was higher than that among professionals from social services (35.3%, CI 30.9, 39.9).

### **Relevance of the issue of YC within the occupational context**

Of all participants, the minority (30.3%) perceived the issue of YC being relevant in their occupational context. A z-test showed that less than 50% of the participants perceived the issue of YC relevant,  $z = -18.93$ ,  $p < .001$ . There was an association between relevance and occupational sector,  $\chi^2 (2, n = 2311) = 18.627$ ,  $p < .001$ . The difference between education (23.5%, CI 19.9-27.5) and the other sectors was significant.

### **Professionals ability to identify YC**

A z-test showed that more than 50% of the respondents identified YC ( $z = 2.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, our hypothesis needs to be rejected. There was a significant association between identification and occupational sector,  $\chi^2 (2, n = 2311) = 24.326$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants from social services were most likely to identify YC in

their occupational context (61.4%, CI 56.7-65.9) whereas participants from education were least likely to be able to identify them (45.4%, CI 41.0-49.9).

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Insert Table 2 about here

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The results regarding the associations between the three indicators for professionals' awareness are shown in table 3. All three variables were associated with each other. Professionals who were familiar with *at least one term* describing YC were significantly more likely to perceive the issue of YC relevant in their daily work routine compared to the professionals not being familiar,  $\chi^2(1, n = 2311) = 35.682, p < .001$  with a small effect ( $\phi = .124$ ). There was an association between familiarity and identification,  $\chi^2(1, n = 2311) = 37.744, p < .001$ . The effect size was  $\phi = .128$  indicating a small effect. The perceived relevance of the issue of YC in the occupational routine was related to the identification of these young people  $\chi^2(1, n = 2311) = 404.207, p < .001$ . The effect size was  $\phi = .418$  indicating a medium effect.

#### **Level of awareness and ability to support**

There was a significant relationship between familiarity with the terminology and being able to support young people with caring responsibilities,  $\chi^2(2, n = 2311) = 20.563, p < .001$ . Professionals who were familiar with a term relating to YC (47.9%, CI 45.2-50.7) were more likely to support them compared to their counterparts reporting not being familiar (38.8%, CI 34.4-43.4). See table 3 for details. The perceived relevance of the issue of YC in the routine occupation was associated with their ability to support them,  $\chi^2(2, n = 2311) = 124.07, p < .001$ . The identification of YC by professionals was related to their reported ability to support these young people,  $\chi^2(2, n = 2311) = 197.077, p < .001$ .

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Insert table 3 about here

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### **Professionals' own training needs**

Almost two thirds (64.2%) of the participants reported that a well-informed specialist unit would be desirable (see table 1). In addition, more than half of the professionals (55.8%) considered more information (e.g., brochures, websites) about the issue of YC helpful. These two kinds of support options were reported similarly by all occupational sectors. Regarding training, the healthcare and educational sector favoured short training sessions lasting for up to one hour, whereas the social service sector reported sessions lasting one or more days to be more suitable. Over all sectors, only 6.4% indicated not having any need for own support when assisting young people with caring responsibilities.

## **DISCUSSION**

The aim of this cross-sectional online survey was to assess the level of awareness of young carers and young adult carers among Swiss professionals. Introducing three indicators for assessing the awareness of YC among professionals (familiarity, relevance and identification), the findings suggest a rather low level of awareness among study participants.

The majority of professionals were not familiar with a term describing young people with caring responsibilities. In addition, the majority of the participants would not perceive the issue of YC as relevant in their occupational context, despite having included only those participants who had had contact with YC. The

findings show that professionals not being familiar with the terminology seem less likely to find the issue of YC relevant. Surprisingly, we found that, despite the findings mentioned prior, more than 50% (the majority) of the professionals being able to identify YC in their daily routine. As described before, identification of the target population took place after participants received a definition of YC at the beginning of the survey. This could have had a possible impact on the professionals' ability to develop an understanding of the issue of young carers while taking part in the survey. It seems that confronting professionals with a definition of the target population and therefore with the issue of YC can have an immediate impact on the level of awareness of professionals on YC. In conclusion, all these three factors (familiarity, relevance and identification) mark possible barriers when we talk about the provision of appropriate support for young carers.

It can be assumed that professionals do encounter YC in their daily routine but do not realise that they form a distinct group as there is not yet any specific terminology used for this population in Switzerland. This lack of recognition can be diminished in introducing a commonly used terminology (Becker, 2000; Becker & Becker 2008; Frech et al, 2019; Joseph et al., 2019). This is also in line with our previous findings from focus groups on professionals' awareness. After being introduced to the issue, professionals quickly recognised the relevance of the issue, as well as earlier encounters with young carers (Leu et al., 2018a). Yet, the professionals' ability to support young people with caring responsibilities is related to whether they deem the topic relevant and to the ability to identify them. This has been observed in various international studies (Grant, Repper & Nolan, 2008; Hill & Broady, 2019; Smyth, Blaxland & Cass, 2011).

Slightly more than half of the participants reported being able to identify YC. The educational sector scored lowest with less than half of all participants in this group. One explanation can be found in the way professionals meet young people. In health care and social services, professionals often meet children and adolescents after having been in contact with the care recipient (parent, sibling or close ones) before hand.



They are already aware of the personal circumstances of a family where as this must not be the case for teachers and educators. These findings are particularly relevant when considering that there are up to two pupils with a caring role per class in grades 4 to 9 in Switzerland (Leu et al, 2019). Yet professionals from the education sector are least likely to identify YC. Taken into account that many professionals from this sector, such as teachers in primary or secondary schools, vocational training teachers, and others meet children and adolescents on an almost daily basis due to compulsory school attendance, this is of high importance.

Therefore it is to be assumed that professionals in education are more likely to be confronted with the effects of the children's caring roles (i.e., exhaustion, absence and lateness because of caring, incomplete homework) and as a consequence should be more likely to identify them (Banks et al., 2002; Frank, Tatum, & Tucker, 1999; Moore, 2005; Moore, McArthur, & Morrow, 2009; Sempik & Becker, 2013). This speaks for a leading role of the educational sector when it comes to identifying YC. Possible reasons for this lack of identification can be found in the occupational assignment of these professionals, that focuses on education and training, as well as on the hiddenness of the caring role, the lack of awareness by professionals and the public alike, and the young carers being afraid of bullying and social exclusion (Bjorgvinsdottir & Halldorsdottir, 2013; Morris, King, Turner, Payne, 2015; Thomas et al, 2003). Teachers might think that tiredness and poor school performance of a young carer (who has not been identified as such) are the consequence of too many leisure activities or of a lack of interest or motivation (Kaiser, 2017).

The social services sector appears to represent the profession being the most likely to identify young carers (close to two thirds of the participants) and in consequence, able to provide support for them. Yet at the same time, respondents from this profession scored lowest of all occupational sectors when reporting being familiar with at least one of the terms referring to the target population (35.3 %). This is surprising as we expected professionals from the social sector to report a comparable familiarity as their colleagues from healthcare.

They often work hand in hand with the person cared for and their carer. Although the social services sector seems to be least familiar with the terminology of YC, they scored highest in recognising, identifying and supporting them. One of the reasons for this finding could lie in their professional assignment as they support not only the person cared for, but also the family and social network they live in. In addition, their professional training is focussed much more on a systemic level compared to trainings in healthcare or education. Another reason could be that these professionals already use other terminologies for young carers apart from those we introduced in the survey. Or, on the other hand, professionals do encounter young people with caring responsibilities although they do not have specific terms or labels for this distinct group. This could be a barrier in providing support, as a commonly applied terminology for the target population is of importance when working in an interdisciplinary network such as education, healthcare and/or social services (Joseph et al., 2019; Frech et al., 2019). In addition, this would also raise the question, if the variable ‘being familiar with the terminology’ should be used for measuring the construction of the variable *awareness*. This issue needs to be explored in further research.

Professionals from all sectors also indicated their own training needs in order to support YC. Any kind of competence centre or case management (well informed specialist unit) was reported as being useful by over two thirds of all professionals over all sectors. This kind of support has been reported previously in international research findings (Hill & Broady, 2019; Phelps, 2017; Purcal et al., 2012). More sources of online or written information as well as training sessions with flexible duration were also reported to be useful for professionals.

## Limitations

The quantitative findings contribute important additional knowledge to the formerly qualitative conducted studies on the awareness of professionals of YC in Switzerland (Leu, Frech & Jung, 2018b). It is important to note that this study used a cross-sectional design and therefore we are not able to attribute causality. A large part of the study population was recruited via email lists available from the research institute that is located in the health sector. Therefore, a larger proportion of participants affiliated with the health care sector were addressed. Explaining the issue of YC in German, French and Italian but afterward only referring to the internationally used terms describing YC (e.g., young carers, children as next of kin) could have been a possible bias. Maybe professionals would have been more familiar with similar terms used for subgroups in the different languages (e.g., children of parents with cancer, siblings of children with cognitive impairment). The findings give us a preliminary understanding about the professionals view on YC in their occupational sector. Future research will add valuable additional information, especially when the perspectives of the young people themselves as well as the person cared for will be integrated. This multi-perspective view will be analysed in the third SNSF-subproject.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE**

Our study highlights a low level of awareness of YC among professionals from education, healthcare and social services in Switzerland. In order to provide appropriate support for YC, it is crucial to increase the level of awareness among professionals, organisations and the public. Awareness-raising initiatives and training programmes should be tailored to meet the needs of YC as well as the various professional sectors. To enable early identification, programmes and/or strategies providing information (websites, brochures, newsletters, checklists) seem to be useful for professionals. Particularly in the educational sector, teachers, social school workers, school psychologists, for example, are meeting YC on a regular basis due to compulsory school

attendance. Therefore, the educational sector plays a vital role in identifying them and implementing support. Additionally, these professionals should be aware of the risk factors of the caring role (i.e., tiredness, missing school days, late arrivals at school and poor grades).

When designing an appropriate support strategy, both adaptations within the syllabus of the vocational training or higher education as well as further training in the occupational context need to be addressed by policy makers. As the participants had the opportunity to give multiple answers to the question of their own training needs, the reported answers cannot be categorised by their frequencies alone. Rather they need to be interpreted as different support approaches that should be combined in order to raise professionals' awareness and in conclusion, raise their ability to identify and support YC.

In conclusion, the level of awareness (familiarity, relevance, identification) and ability to support YC varied between the professional sectors. Despite a rather low level of awareness regarding the target population, Swiss professionals seem to be able to support these young people once they identify them. The findings from this study provide important insights into the situation of young carers that can be used for developing and implementing national and international support structures. Raising awareness, introducing a terminology for the target group that can be applied in all disciplines as well as providing training should be prioritised in order to enable professionals to support YC. Increasing the awareness among professionals in order to provide appropriate support for these young people is of high importance and should be prioritised when developing national and international policies and recommendations.

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## **Main Text File**

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## **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no competing interests.

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**Table 1.** Characteristics of participants by occupational sectors

	Occupational Sector			
	Overall (N = 2311)	Education (n = 502)	Healthcare (n = 1356)	Social services (n = 453)
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
<b>Gender</b> (ref = female)	72.3 (1671)	67.1 (337)	74.9 (1016)	70.2 (318)
missing	8.5 (196)	7.2 (36)	8.8 (120)	8.8 (40)
<b>Work experience (years)</b>				
short (<5)	24.0 (555)	21.9 (110)	22.8 (309)	30.0 (136)
medium (6-15)	35.1 (811)	36.9 (185)	33.5 (454)	38.0 (172)
long (>15)	40.9 (945)	41.2 (207)	43.7 (539)	32.0 (145)
<b>Main professional language</b>				
German	64.7 (1496)	70.3 (353)	64.5 (874)	59.4 (269)
French	8.0 (186)	8.2 (41)	5.5 (75)	15.5 (70)
Italian	2.1 (48)	3.2 (16)	1.3 (17)	3.3 (15)
Raeto-Romanic	0.0 (1)	0.2 (1)	(0)	(0)
Multiple	17.2 (397)	11.4 (57)	20.6 (280)	13.2 (60)
Other	7.9 (183)	6.8 (34)	8.1 (110)	8.6 (39)
<b>Own training needs<sup>a</sup></b>				
more information	55.8 (1290)	57.2 (287)	56.9 (772)	51.0 (231)

training session/s	25.4 (587)	25.7 (129)	27.4 (371)	19.2 (87)
further training	23.2 (536)	20.5 (103)	23.3 (316)	25.8 (117)
specialist unit	64.2 (1484)	61.4 (308)	65.6 (889)	63.4 (287)
none	6.4 (149)	8.0 (40)	5.3 (72)	8.2 (37)
other	2.7 (63)	2.6 (13)	2.7 (37)	2.9 (13)

Notes. <sup>a</sup>Multiple answers possible.

**Table 2.** Familiarity, relevance, identification, ability to support by occupational sectors.

	Occupational Sector							
	Overall (N = 2311)		Education 21.7% (n = 502)		Healthcare 58.7% (n = 1356)		Social services 19.6% (n = 453)	
	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI
<b>Familiarity yes</b>	43.8 (1012)	[41.8, 45.8]	45.0 (226)	[40.6, 49.5]	46.2 (626)	[43.5, 48.9]	35.3 (160)	[30.9, 39.9]
<b>Relevance yes</b>	30.3 (700)	[28.4, 32.2]	23.5 (118)	[19.9, 27.5]	30.8 (418)	[28.4, 33.4]	36.2 (164)	[31.8, 40.8]
<b>Identification yes</b>	53.1 (1226)	[51.0, 55.1]	45.4 (228)	[41.0, 49.9]	53.1 (720)	[50.4, 55.8]	61.4 (278)	[56.7, 65.9]
<b>Ability to support yes</b>	55.9 (1291)	[53.8, 57.9]	47.8 (240)	[43.4, 52.3]	54.1 (733)	[51.4, 56.7]	70.2 (318)	[65.8, 74.4]

Notes. CI, 95% confidence interval.

**Table 3.** Professionals' level of awareness and ability to support

	Familiarity				Relevance				Identification				Ability to support			
	yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no	
	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI	% (n)	CI
<b>Familiarity yes</b>	100 (1012)	-	0	-	53.1 (372)	[49.4, 56.9]	39.7 (640)	[37.3, 42.2]	49.8 (610)	[46.9, 52.6]	37.1 (402)	[34.2, 40.0]	47.9 (619)	[45.2, 50.7]	38.8 (184)	[34.4, 43.4]
<b>Relevance yes</b>	36.8 (372)	[33.8, 39.8]	25.3 (328)	[22.9, 27.7]	100 (700)	-	0	-	48.4 (593)	[45.5, 51.2]	9.9 (107)	[8.2, 11.8]	39.7 (513)	[37.1, 42.5]	17.3 (82)	[14.0, 21.0]
<b>Identification n yes</b>	60.3 (610)	[57.2, 63.3]	47.4 (616)	[44.7, 50.2]	84.7 (593)	[81.8, 87.3]	39.3 (633)	[36.9, 41.7]	100 (1226)	-	0	-	65.8 (850)	[63.2, 68.4]	33.1 (157)	[28.9, 37.6]
<b>Ability to support yes</b>	61.2 (619)	[58.1, 64.2 ]	51.7 (672)	[49.0, 54.5]	73.3 (513)	[69.8, 76.5]	48.3 (778)	[45.8, 50.8]	69.3 (850)	[66.7, 71.9]	40.6 (441)	[37.7, 43.6]	100 (1291)	-	0	-

Notes. CI, 95% confidence interval.